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Pryor OPI Team - Planning for Improvement March 8, 2011

Think of the change process as a traveling canoe, and your decisions and actions as the paddle. You will get where you are going one stroke at a time with the decisions and actions you make. - DJ Vanas

Instructional News – Calli Rusche-

Nicholson: Summary of Work for February:

During this past month the staff has utilized four coaching cycles, one modeled lesson, and two lesson planning meetings. The high school staff also participated in an MBI leadership meeting, three advisory planning meetings, and the scheduling committee met twice to plan for next year's schedule. Finally, the elementary had their language arts PLC.

Elementary: The elementary kindergarten teacher's collaborative visit to Crow Agency was rescheduled to the end of March. This visit will focus on the Imagine It language arts program implementation of reading instruction and workshop effectiveness strategies.

Junior High and High School: External consultant, Roy Shelton, for Algebraic Thinking made a visit to Plenty Coups on February 4th and will return on March 4th. In between the visits he also had an online coaching session on February 17 and 18. On March 9th Side by Side Consultant Ann Ganzerd will visit our language arts staff to provide job-embedded professional development that is program specific.

Both Schools: Both schools have been given the released items for the MontCAS test and have had a very brief collaboration on how to utilize the test items. Future professional development and PLCs will focus on utilizing the released items for the whole year. On March 2nd both schools participated in an early release in-service provided by John Downs on the Montana Behavioral Initiative. This visit was focused around classroom essentials and expectations of minor and major behaviors.

Upcoming: On March 7th both schools will participate in an onsite professional development on lesson planning and how to utilize professional learning communities. I will provide the majority of this training in a

collaborative planning effort with the administration.

School Board Involvement --- Stevie

Schmitz: The board has been working very hard to review and establish current policies. Two day-long work sessions have been facilitated with the Montana School Boards Association. After this review process, the board will adopt these policies through a two-reading process. This work will replace policies that are decades old. Congratulations!

The board will be working on the 2011-2012 budget and the process to hire a superintendent and principal replacing Dr. Walker who has resigned and Principal Stands who is retiring.

As the OPI Board Coach for Lodge Grass as well as Pryor, I am planning a second training retreat in the next couple of months and hope that both boards will be able to attend.

School Community News – Savannah

Sinquaah : At the Montana Advisory Council on Indian Education (MACIE) meeting, I learned that Digital Academy and GEAR UP are several resources that our school district can utilize more to benefit our students academically. We can use the Digital Academy to offer more electives such as Fine Art History or Spanish to our students-an opportunity that was never there before. Also, I discovered that GEAR UP is a program which provides money and opportunities for our students to attend college campus visits, gain scholarships, and learn more about careers. As a result, for the month of February, I have been closely working with Shannon Clarke, PCHS GEAR UP Coordinator to help senior students and their parents complete their financial aid paperwork (FAFSA, Crow Higher Ed., and other scholarships) before the March and April deadlines.

Other projects that I worked on for the month of February were Clan Day (helped collect permission slips/guest lists from students/parents, sent out

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invites, and created an excel spreadsheet so that staff next year can use it as a tool to run Clan Day), Montana Behavioral Initiative (MBI) school poster kickoff (winner is Dante Stands who created a Warbonnet logo), Stepping Up Youth Leadership conference (Darrell Turnsplenty has been chosen to speak as a young leader there and a few of our students are to attend in April), organizing a Parent Planning Committee to run the first Parent Involvement meeting, working with the School Improvement Team (SIT) Student Representatives to develop ideas on increasing student attendance and decreasing skipping and communicating to parents and students the importance of the upcoming CRT testing.

Transformation News--- *David Stringfield:* Pryor's School Improvement Team will meet on March 7th and March 22nd. Minutes are always made public and are available. While monthly meetings seek to bring staff and community input into the decision-making process, communication channels have not proved effective. Team members are considering using designated staff, parent and student meetings to better bring feedback helping to improve this decision-making process. Technology plans and extended teacher day plans have been detailed and approved by team members.

Student Attendance – Jan 24 – Feb 23:

K-6: 84% MS - 94%. HS - 39%, but a transition glitch between semesters is preventing accurate high school attendance reporting with Powerschool right now.

Teacher Attendance –September - 97%, October - 95%, November and December - 90%, January - 97%.

Early Release Professional Development

– On February 3rd Karma Nelson helped to further develop teacher collaboration skills through her training on professional learning communities (PLC). This training was attended by 16 certified and 4 classified staff members. What do we want students to know/do and how do we respond when they do not know/do what we expect, are some of the questions guiding the work of collaborative teacher teams.

In addition to collaborative teams described earlier in this newsletter by our Instructional Leader, Pryor Schools have teams continually working on developing positive behavioral initiatives (MBI) and following up on our March 2nd professional development with student behavior specialists.

From the Helena Office -- *Nancy Coleman, SIG Unit Director:*

Grant Requirements for March and April:

For the board's information we are providing a listing of things that need to be accomplished at various levels. Much of the work is a continuation from the previous month:

For the on-site OPI employees:

- Support the state tests which are slated for March;
- Utilize the checklist developed to ensure the processes required for SOPPAS are followed;
- Begin to gather tools to help staff develop a process to revise and update class schedules, the school calendar and various handbooks for the districts which will include community and student involvement in this process;
- Continue to work to foster shared leadership in the implementation of the District Action Plan (DAP) bringing all voices to the table;
- Continue work with SIG District Leadership Team (DLT) to establish processes and procedures to monitor and implement the District Action Plans details;
- Continue to assist with organizing the collaborative Professional Learning Communities (PLCs);
- Continue to support actions steps within the Montana Behavioral Initiative (MBI);
- Begin to work with local staff to determine a protocol for scheduled external professional development providers; and
- Continue to provide job-embedded professional development through training and coaching for all staff.

For the Principal:

- Develop and implement an evaluation schedule for the 3rd party evaluator;
- Assume the required role as established by the SOPPAS evaluation process;
- Monitor the assessment plan – protocol developed and plan discussions with staff and students on how to improve the process for next year;
- Continue to attend School Improvement Team meeting(s); coordinate professional development of the PLCs which should include calendars – teaching/class schedules and handbook revisions for board review by April;
- Continue to lead, along with the MBI facilitator, action steps within the MBI;
- Continue to assess progress on the work of SIG DLT to start planning for next year;
- Continue to monitor a system to determine ‘at risk’ students based on – attendance, past class grades, discipline, support systems for success (student information system); and
- Put a plan in place that will accurately gather the required reporting data for grant compliance.

For the District/Superintendent:

- Begin the evaluation process for principals through the SOPPAS process;
- Continue to support the implementation of the DAP through resources, etc.; and
- Continue to participate in the finance calls that are provided by the OPI once a month.

For teachers:

- Actively participate in the SOPPAS evaluation process;
- Actively participate in the collaborative PLCs;
- Continue to plan and implement lesson plans that include standards alignment with ongoing assessments;
- Continue to implement the programs for communication arts and mathematics with fidelity; and

- Continue to actively participate in school improvement teams which you are involved with.

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Statewide Youth and Community

Outreach – *Don Wetzel, Jr.*: This month the schools made great strides in implementing youth initiatives that included afterschool programs and clubs. Rodeo, drama and poetry clubs have been developed and student lounges are becoming a reality in our schools with support coming from parents, teachers and school boards. These incentive-driven programs will provide positive rewards for youth that improve attendance and grades. I was able to sit down and visit with many teachers and staff members at each of our SIG schools and explain our community and youth-driven work and to also discuss ways to improve our communications around the youth. It is exciting to have these discussions!

The CL’s big focus for this first year has been to develop relationships with the Youth, Elders (Culture), Community programs, and Parents and Families. This is a long process, but it is exciting to see how it has progressed at each of our SIG schools. Culture and identity are brought up often when discussing our plans for the community and schools. We have the privilege to work with the strongest and most resilient Tribal Nations in these schools and want to bring those historic strengths to the forefront and help in developing success.

In two of our schools we have began the Home Visiting Project (<http://www.pthvp.org/>) that is bringing great benefits to parents and the school. Schools staff are invited by the community liaisons to make visits to parents with the first visit focused on simply the hopes and dreams of our students. Let’s continue this positive trend and work together to keep all of our students’ hopes and dreams at the center of our work.

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